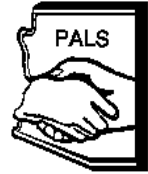




Parent Information Network



Reasons Why Parents Attend Meetings

- Responsibility as a parent
- Involvement with children
- To see what their child is learning
- To observe children's performances
- Refreshments and food
- Who is teaching my child?
- Spousal pressure or support
- Socialization opportunity with other parents
- To check on the appearance of their child's classroom and school
- Changes being made at school
- High interest in education
- To learn from programs presented
- Seeking information
- So 'they'll leave me alone'

Reasons Why Parents Don't Attend Meetings

- Boring
- Negative reinforcement
- Schedule conflicts – work, needs
- Lack of communication – school to home
- Lack of transportation
- Don't realize the importance of participation in school activities
- Embarrassment about socio-economic status
- Personal family situations
- Lack of interest
- Don't feel welcome at school
- Cultural differences
- Lack of child care
- Fear of intimidation by teachers or administrators
- Personality conflicts between parents and school personnel
- Group's identity – parents might be uncomfortable with group's identity or purpose
- Gender issues – female parent not comfortable with male teacher
- Apathy, fatigue
- Location of the meeting
- Language barriers between parents and faculty or staff of family, etc.
- Fear of possible additional involvement at school
- Students don't want parents at school activities
- Needs not being met by the meeting or program
- Fear of the INS (Immigration and Naturalization Service)

How to Bring About Change and Increase or Enhance Parent Involvement

- Develop trust – be sensitive to parent needs
- Be sensitive to parent perceptions
- Personal contact - either by phone, note, or letter
- Have children send personal invitations to their parents
- Use radio or TV community calendar announcements in the language of the parents
- Use “eye-catching” announcements with graphics and colorful stock
- Reach parents with newsletters, flyers sent home with students, posters, flyers in grocery bags at trading posts and local stores
- Use parent advocate with a staff member to “reach” parents
- Encourage parents to bring a buddy or family Member
- If an interpreter is needed, use one from the neighborhood of the parents
- Use a school bus to pick up parents, perhaps at the same time students are picked up
- Organize car pools
- Involve students with their parents in an activity
- Offer child care while the meeting is taking place, no matter where the meeting is
- Show appreciation for child care volunteers with a recognition ceremony or party at the end of the year
- Have parents stay for a school meeting, present a student for a school activity performance AFTER the meeting
- Plan different meeting times to reach different parents – breakfast, mid-morning, after-school, evening
- Change meeting places – parents’ homes, libraries, community centers, tribal chambers, Chapter Houses
- Have Saturday meetings targeted to single parent families or families where both parents are employed
- Avoid meetings on paydays - they’re shopping days
- Have a drawing for a prize at the event you’re having – give raffle tickets to parents. Ask the PTA, PTG, or the PTO to sponsor the raffle.
- Follow the agenda, that’s what people are expecting to happen
- Share the time – don’t let one person dominate the meeting
- Stop the meeting or adjourn the meeting on time
- Let parents know you appreciate their participation

This document was originally compiled by Shirley Hilts-Scott and Sheryl Stewart, Parent Information Network Specialists, from information contributed by participants in a workshop, “Promoting Positive Parent Participation.” The document was revised in October 2001 by Shirley Hilts-Scott, under Contract F8-0017-003 with funds allocated by the U.S. Department of Education under IDEA '97. The contents do not necessarily represent the policy of the agency, nor should endorsement by the federal government be assumed. The Arizona Department of Education of the State of Arizona does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, color, national origin, sex, disability or age in its programs, activities or in its hiring and employment practices. The following person has been designated to handle inquiries regarding the non-discrimination policies: Debra K. Jackson, Deputy Associate Superintendent of Administrative Services, 1535 W. Jefferson, Phoenix, AZ 85007, (602) 542-3186. This document is in the public domain and may be freely reproduced in its current format. For more information, call the Parent Information Network at (602) 364-4015 or 800-352-4558. RB06